Analyzing Metadiscourse in Kurdish University Students' EFL Writing

شیکردنەوەی مێتادیسکۆرس لە وتاری ئینگلیزیی قوتابیانی کورد لە زانکۆدا

تحلیل میتادیسکورس في المقالات الانجليزية للطلبة الكورد في الجامعة

کاوه قادر محمد ¹، هیمداد عەبدولقەهار مەحەمەد ²

¹،² بەشی ئینگلیزی ، کۆلێژی پەروەردەی بنەڕەتی، زانکۆی سەڵاحەددین ، شاری هەولێر، هەرێمی کوردستان، عێراق

Corresponding author's e-mail: kawa.muhammad@su.edu.krd

پوخته

ئاماژەکانی مێتادیسکۆرس تایبەتمەندییەکی گرنگ نووسینی ئەکادیمییە کە بۆ پێکانی هەندێک ئامانج بەکاردەهێنرێت، وەک بەستنەوەی دەقەکە بەیەکەوە، نیشاندانی هەڵوێستەکانی نووسەر و کارلێکرکدن لەگەڵ خوێنەری دەقەکە. جۆره جیاوازەکانی مێتادیسکۆرس بۆ ئەنجامدانی ئەرکی جۆراوجۆر لە دەقێکی دیاریکراودا بەکاردەهێنرێن، بەڵام بە شێوەیەکی گشتی بەسەر دوو پۆلی سەرەکیدا دابەش دەکرێن کە بریتین لە 'ئاماژەکانی یەکێتی دەق' و ' ئاماژەی هەلوێستی نووسەر' بە گوێرەی بەکارهێنانیان لە دەقدا. لە ژێر ڕۆشنایی گرنگی ئەم تایبەتمەندییەی نووسین، ئەم لێکۆڵینەوەیە ئەنجامدرا بۆ شیکردنەوەی ئاماژەکانی مێتادیسکۆرس لە وتاری جۆری گفتوگۆئامێز (ئارگیومێنتی)کە لەلایەن قوتابیانی کوردزمانی بەشی ئینگلیزی نووسراو بوون،. لێکۆڵینەوەکە تایبەت بوو بە ٣٠ قوتابی ئاستبەرزی زمانی ئینگلیزی لە کۆتا قۆناغی کۆلێژی پەروەردەی بنەڕەتی زانکۆی سەڵاحەدین. دوای ئەوەی ئەرکی نووسین بە خوێندکاران سپێردرا، دەق وتارەکان بەپێی میتۆدۆلۆژیای زمانەوانی کۆرپەس کۆکرانەوە و شیکرانەوە. واته شیکاری چەندایەتی و ئاماری پەیوەندی لەسەر داتا زمانەوانییەکان ئەنجامدرا. توێژینەوەکە دەریخست کە قوتابیانی ئاماژەپێکراو لە ڕووی چەندایەتی و چۆنایەتی بە شێوەیەکی بەرچاو باشن لە بەکارهێنانی مێتادیسکۆرس. بەڵام، قوتابییەکان ئەدایەکی ناجۆریان نیشان دا لە ڕووی زیادەڕۆیی لە بەکارهێنانی ئاماژەکانی مێتادیسکۆرس.

وشه سەرەکییەکان: مێتادیسکۆرس؛ ئاماژەی یەکێتی دەق؛ ئاماژەی هەلوێستی نووسەر؛ وتاری گفتوگۆئامێز؛ قوتابی بەشی ئینگلیزی وەک زمانی بێگانه.

الملخص

تُعد مؤشرات ميتاديسكورس سمات أساسية للكتابة الأكاديمية تُستخدم لتحقيق أغراض خطابية معينة ، مثل تثبيت النص معًا ، وتمييز مواقف الكاتب ، والتفاعل مع القراء. يتم استخدام أنواع مختلفة من ميتاديسكورس لأداء وظائف مختلفة في نص معين ، لكنها مقسمة بشكل أساسي إلى فئتين رئيسيتين هما "ن علامات نصية" و "علامات موقف الكاتب " استنادًا إلى استخداماتهما في النص. بالإشارة إلى أهمية هذه الميزة النصية ، أجريت الدراسة الحالية للتحقيق في علامات ميتاديسكورس الموجودة في المقالات الجدلية التي كتبها طلبة الكورد للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في المستوى الكلية. اقتصرت الدراسة على ٣٠ طالباً من مستوى المتقدم في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية الأساسية بجامعة صلاح الدين. بعد تكليف الطلاب بمهمة الكتابة ، تم جمع المقالات وتحليلها وفقًا لمنهجية علم اللغة الجماعي (لغويات المتون). أي ، تم إجراء التحليل الكمي والإحصاءات الارتباطية على البيانات اللغوية. وجدت الدراسة أن الطلبة الكورد للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بارعون بشكل استثنائي في استخدام ميتاديسكورس من حيث الكمية والنوعية. ومع ذلك ، أظهر الطلبة كفاءة ضعيفة فيما يتعلق بالإفراط في استخدام علامات ميتاديسكورس.

الكلمات الأساسية: ميتاديسكورس؛ علامات نصية؛ علامات موقف الكاتب؛ مقالات جدلية؛ طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

Abstract

Metadiscourse markers are essential features of academic writing used to achieve certain discoursal purposes, such as holding the text together, marking the writer's stances, and interacting with the audience. Different types of metadiscourse are employed to perform various functions in a given text, but they are mainly divided into two major categories of 'textual' and 'interpersonal' based on their main uses. With reference to the significance of this textual feature, the present study was conducted to investigate metadiscourse markers found in argumentative essays written by Kurdish university EFL students. The study was restricted to 30 advanced senior students of English Department at University of Basic Education, Salahaddin University-Erbil. After assigning the writing task to the students, the essays were collected and analyzed according to the corpus linguistics methodology. That is, quantitative analyses and correlational statistics were performed on the linguistic data. The study discovered that Kurdish EFL students are exceptionally good at using metadiscourse in terms of quantity and quality. Nevertheless, the students showed poor competency with regard to overusing metadiscourse markers.

Key words: Metadiscourse features; Textual Markers; Interpersonal Markers: Argumentative Essays; EFL Students

1. Introduction

Research into non-native writing has a long history in the field of language teaching and learning. Different aspects and dimensions of written language have been investigated by researchers. Conventionally, previous studies concentrated on textual aspects of writing only; Recently, studying the interpersonal functions of linguistic elements in writing have gained ground, too. Hereby, this piece of work is particularly dedicated to investigating Kurdish EFL students' writing 'Metadiscousre' - an important linguistic feature of academic texts that contain both textual and interpersonal representations.

'Metadiscousre' has been given different definitions ranging from simple to sophisticated descriptions depending on its general and specific purposes for which it is utilized by writers. According to Hyland (1998), metadiscourse, in its broad sense, is a term commonly used to refer to miscellaneous features by which a text is related to its context. This text-context tie is usually achieved through helping readers connect, organize and interpret textual content in the writer's preferred way and in accordance with the values and understanding of the related discourse community. This definition is somehow complicated, thus further explanation will be given later for a better understanding of the concept. Hyland (2004) further explains that these features are used by writers in the academic context as interacting stances and rhetorical devices to go beyond ideational dimension of the text and represent their social selves to their readers. This kind of self-representation through linguistic devices is to show writers' social negotiation and solidarity with readers. On the other hand, some analysts (such as Bunton, 1998; Mauranen, 1993; Valero-Garces, 1996) have considered the term 'metadiscourse' in a very narrow sense to include features of text organization. In other words, the language elements by which a text is held together. Whereas Beauvais (1989) has specifically used the term to function as illocutionary markers. In a similar, yet more general, definition, metadiscousre has been characterized as textual devices by which writers demonstrate their rhetorical and linguistic stances to accomplish two goals; namely organizing the textual discourse and expressing implications of the content (Schiffrin, 1980).

Concerning the focus of the current study, the most relevant definition of metadiscourse is the one presented by Hyland (2000). According to him, metadiscousre is a collection of unique devices that help readers process written texts. A few examples of these devices are hedges (e.g., might, perhaps, possibly); logical connectives (e.g., however, therefore); and sequencing items (e.g., first, next, then). In this sense, metadiscourse is usually employed in textbooks for teaching academic writing. He further adds that metadiscourse features also help writers turn a hard, dry text into a smooth, easy-to-read piece of writing. To this end, metadiscourse features (or markers) are commonly addressed in a one-by-one and gradual style in writing teaching context, as the main focus is not on their function, but on how they can be operated to shape the writer-text-reader interactions. Moreover, Hyland & Tse (2004) highlight the importance and cruciality of these metadiscourse

markers for advanced academic writers in presenting and negotiating content in a way that is informative and suitable to the target readers. Hence, writers' voice is influenced by the choice of these metadiscourse markers to keep up with the standards of their writing discourse and readers.

The substantial functionality of metadiscourse is not only condensed in and restricted to teaching and learning writing. Many linguists and analysts reiterate the significance of these features in researching areas. For instance, Schiffrin (1980) recognizes the usefulness of metadiscourse in a wide spectrum of textual analysis studies such as text properties, participant interactions, historical linguistics, intercultural differences and writing pedagogy. This validates the need to conduct the present study on the use of metadiscourse in EFL students' writings in the target EFL context.

Based upon the aforementioned clarifications that metadiscourse is a prominent linguistic feature of academic writing, it is inevitably worthwhile to mention the writing genre to which metadiscourse is the most relevant and of much use. In this regard, Crowhurst (1990) considers composing an effective argumentative piece of writing a crucial skill for academic and social life success. Subsequently, the use of metadiscourse markers is the most typical feature of argumentative writing compared to other writing genres. Furthermore, Crismore (1989, p. 93) states that metadiscourse is "quite relevant in argumentative writing, since authors refer quite frequently to the state of the argument, to the reader's understanding of it, or the author's understanding of his own argument". Therefore, the present study works on analyzing metadiscourse markers in argumentative essays written by Kurdish EFL university students. The analysis is based on Hyland's (1999) major model of metadiscourse markers as shown below:

Table1: Metadiscourse Markers Model (Hyland, 1999, p. 7)

No.	Category A. Textual Metadiscourse	Function	Examples (Signals)
1	Logical Connectives	express semantic relations between main clauses	in addition / but / therefore / thus
2	Frame Markers	explicitly refer to discourse shifts or text stages	First / finally/ to repeat / To clarify
3	Endophoric Markers	refer to information in other parts of the text	noted above / see Fig 1 / section 2
4	Evidentials	refer to the source of information from other texts	according to X / Z states
5	Code Glosses	help readers grasp the meanings of ideational material	Namely /e.g. / in other words / i.e. / say
	B. Interpersonal Metadiscourse		
6	Hedges	withhold writer's full commitment to statements	Might /perhaps / it is possible
7	Emphatics	emphasize force or writer's certainty in the message	in fact /definitely / it is clear
8	Attitude Markers	express writer's attitude to propositional content	Surprisingly / I agree / X claims
9	Relational Markers	explicitly refer to or build relationship with reader	Consider / imagine / recall / you see
10	Person Markers	explicit reference to author	I / we / my / mine / our

2. Literature Review

Due to its effectiveness in writing, studying metadiscourse markers has gained interest of many researchers. Specifically, in the EFL context, a variety of studies have been carried out investigating different aspects of metadiscourse. Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995) have examined the relationship between essay quality and the rate of metadiscourse items. The study inquires into the assumption that good essays might contain a larger number and broader variety of metadiscourse markers. Consequently, the study discovers that the quality of good essays is not subject to the quantity of metadiscourse markers, but how effective these markers are employed in favor of discourse. In a similar study, Simin and Tavangar (2009) considered the impact of English language learners' level on the number of metadiscourse markers used in their writings. According to the study, more proficient EFL learners use of metadiscourse markers more than less proficient ones. Gholami, Nejad, and Pour (2014), in their study, have focused on the misuses of metadiscourse markers

by EFL students of their target university in Iran. Their main aim has not been how proficient the students are in using metadiscourse features in their writing, but rather the nature of mistakes they make in utilizing these markers. Hyland (2004) has investigated one specific dimension of metadiscourse across miscellaneous disciplines. He has looked at the phenomenon of using metadiscourse features as interactional resources by academic writers. The study's concentration is on how writers can establish interpersonal relationship with their readers through metadiscourse features.

All in all, these studies have rendered a substantial service to English language research in terms of studying metadiscourse in non-native writings. Yet, what makes the present study valuable to conduct belongs to two unique factors. Firstly, this study covers the analysis of a complete array of metadiscourse markers of both categories - textual and interpersonal which is lacking in the abovementioned studies. Secondly, the focus of the present study is only on the English argumentative essays written by Kurdish EFL students of the advanced level at university.

3. Purpose

With reference to the remarkable functionalities of metadiscourse in writing composition and researches discussed above, this study aims to carry out a thorough analysis of metadiscourse markers in EFL academic essays of argumentative genre written by Kurdish university students. The study attempts to discover how proficient the students are in incorporating metadiscourse in their writings through examining the amount, category, and types of metadiscourse features found in the essays. In response to the accomplishment of these research aims, the study pursues to address the following questions:

Question1: How proficient are the Kurdish university EFL students in using a sufficient amount of metadiscourse features in their essays?

Question 2: What is the level of the metadiscourse markers found in Kurdish EFL students' essays based on Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)?

Question 3: What functional types of metadiscourse are found in the students' writing? Which is the most common type?

Question 4: Which metadiscourse category is more prevalent in their essays - 'textual' or 'interpersonal'?

Question 5: Is there a relationship between metadiscourse use in general and the students' English level?

Based on the students' English level and their study background at university, it is hypothesized by the researchers that they are going to demonstrate their mastery of metadiscourse features in their argumentative writings. The students are expected to use a sufficient amount of metadiscourse markers of adequate

correctness and relevancy as well. However, the findings of this study seem to be valuable in a few ways. They will be indicative of metadiscourse quality of Kurdish EFL students' writings. They will also be beneficial as implications for EFL writing pedagogy and might inspire what necessary intervention is needed.

4. Methodology

Design

This study is an empirical research that investigates factual materials for the target unit of analysis. The study has followed corpus linguistics methodology in collecting and analyzing the data. The empirical nature of the study belongs to the fact that it works on the real, observable linguistic features demonstrated by participants rather than a theoretical, elicited type of data or responses which are subject to researchers' own understanding and interpretation. The study, on the other hand, is a corpus-based work of literature as it has compiled a small, specialized corpus of learner essays and has applied corpus analysis procedures for attaining desired features.

Scope and Participants

This research paper is conducted as a partial, complementary requirement for a PhD dissertation. The dissertation is about EFL writing linguistic features of Kurdish university students. The doctorate dissertation works on miscellaneous linguistic features found in argumentative essays written by senior students of English Department at University of Basic Education, Salahaddin University-Erbil in the academic year 2021-2022. Due to its narrowed focus, the present study has selected to work on only one writing feature which is metadiscourse. Metadiscourse, as stated in the introduction, is recognized as one of the outstanding characteristic elements of academic writing. Both textual and interpersonal uses of metadiscourse types refer to the writer's high standards of communicating ideas and interacting with readers. On this basis, only 30 students of advanced English proficiency level were decided to be included in the study. The students' levels were determined based on a previously administered placement test to 100 students.

Material

To examine the linguistic features targeted by the study, the participants were assigned to compose an argumentative essay of no less than 500 words on only one out of the ten topics given by the researchers. The topics were about real-life situations that are familiar to the students, such as 'using books vs internet sources for research', 'punishing or educating criminals?' and 'festivals: enjoyment or morals". Before the task, the participants were well instructed to pay attention to academic style and good writing mechanisms. They also had the benefit of untimed essay writing task so that they can show their ultimate performance

without the need to rush. Consequently, 30 argumentative essays from the advanced-level EFL students were collected for the research analysis.

Analysis

As explained before, the research material of the present study includes a number of argumentative essays written by Kurdish university students of English as a foreign language. In this way, the students' essays are regarded as 'specialized corpus' in terms of length, genre and context. Therefore, the study follows relevant corpus linguistics procedures in analyzing and categorizing the linguistic data. For this purpose, reliable corpus analysis computer software and web-based tools have been used. In conformity with these procedures, Baker (2010) defines corpus linguistics as an outstanding discipline that deals with analyzing a corpus (a collection of texts) by using related computer software. Asserting the facility achieved with corpus linguistics for the data analysis, Baker explains that the derivation of certain textual aspects, which were difficult to be conducted by a human, is now facilitated thanks to corpus linguistics. More specifically, Breyer (2011, p. 1) points out that empirical analysis of corpora "has enabled researchers to discover patterns of language usage that had previously remained hidden from view." He also moves on to the analysis part and reassures that such language patterns can be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively since specific language function performance is to be analyzed.

In line with the analysis procedures explained above, the researchers have used one of the most reliable web-based corpus analysis tools in processing the essays called 'Text Inspector'. This tool analyses linguistic features of large texts based on 200 different metrics benchmarked to CEFR. Concerning the current study, the researchers have employed this tool for analyzing, classifying and correlating metadiscourse features in accordance with Hyland's (1999) model.

5. Results and Discussion

This section presents the results and reports the findings of analyzing the research material. The main focus of the analysis was examining the use of metadiscourse in the students' argumentative essays in broad and narrow senses. Thus, overall metadiscourse types and markers were the target of the study. The results of data analysis have been categorized in line with the research aims and questions.

To pave the way for a clear understanding of the results' representation, it is worthwhile to first explain the 'type-token' concept in writing. According to the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition - 'CARLA', the concept accounts for the lexical richness measure of a text with regard to a variety of unique

words found in the text. Hence, Token is the number of total words in a text with repetitions counted. Whereas type indicates total number of unique words used in a text without counting the repetitions. So, the larger the number of type words is, the richer a text is in terms of lexical features. This study has depended on the 'type words' count for the data analysis of essays.

Table 2 manifests several crucial analytic and evaluative data that rate overall essays and metadiscourse features in particular according to CEFR level. Apparently, the first two columns of the table present the number of 'type words' and metadiscourse markers used in each essay. Based on the calculation of essay length and the number of metadiscourse markers, the third column presents the percentage of metadiscourse markers found in the essays ordered from the lowest to highest percentage rate. The last two columns show the rating scores of both essays and metadiscourse features separately. The text analysis tool used by the study in processing student essays uses CEFR standards to identify the quality level of textual features. For each essay as a whole, the tool has used more than 21 metrics to evaluate its level. Concerning the CEFR level of essay's metadiscourse features, the frequency, relevancy, and inclusiveness factors of features are considered.

Having looked at the results shown, it is observable that all the students have proved their writing metadiscourse proficiency to an over-satisfactory level. This is understood from the fact that the lowest use percentage of metadiscourse features is (7.44%), which simply means that this specific student has approximately used seven metadiscourse markers per each 100 words. What's even more positive is the level of metadiscourse quality utilized by the students since almost all have recorded C1 and C2 scores. There are exceptions for the last eight essays that seem to contain excessive use of metadiscourse markers. This metadiscourse feature overuse is regarded as a negative indication of the students' understanding of metadiscourse function in writing. Using 14 to 16 markers per 100 words would definitely weaken a discourse and reduces its communicative value and quality.

Table 2: Rating Data of Metadiscourse Markers

Essay	Essay Words	Metadiscourse Markers		CEFR Level	
	Count	*Count*	*%*	*Essays*	*Metadiscourse*
1	120	*9*	*7.44*	C1	*C2*
2	176	*14*	*7.95*	C2	*C2*
3	190	*17*	*8.95*	C1+	*C2*
4	101	*9*	*9.18*	C1	*C2*
5	149	*14*	*9.52*	C1	*C2*
6	211	*21*	*9.95*	C2	*C2*
7	130	*13*	*10*	C1+	*C2*
8	156	*16*	*10.39*	B2+	*C2*
9	218	*23*	*10.6*	C2	*C2*
10	158	*17*	*10.9*	C1+	*C2*
11	236	*26*	*10.97*	C1	*C2*
12	177	*20*	*11.3*	C1+	*C2*
13	207	*24*	*11.43*	C2	*C2*
14	225	*27*	*11.84*	C2	*C2*
15	155	*18*	*11.61*	C1	*C2*
16	277	*34*	*12.19*	C2	*C2*
17	178	*22*	*12.29*	C2	*C1+*
18	225	*28*	*12.33*	C2	*C1+*
19	183	*23*	*12.43*	C1+	*C1+*
20	219	*28*	*12.84*	C2	*C1+*
21	150	*20*	*13.33*	C1+	*C1*
22	151	*21*	*13.82*	B2+	*C1*
23	191	*27*	*14.14*	C1+	*Not calculated*
24	193	*28*	*14.14*	C2	*Not calculated*
25	186	*27*	*14.59*	C2	*Not calculated*
26	168	*25*	*14.97*	C1+	*Not calculated*
27	214	*33*	*15.14*	C1	*Not calculated*
28	188	*30*	*15.87*	C1	*Not calculated*
29	169	*27*	*16.07*	C1+	*Not calculated*
30	142	*23*	*16.08*	B2+	*Not calculated*
		Total: 664			

In the above data presentation, the study answered two research questions examining students' command of metadiscourse and identifying their metadiscourse level based on CEFR score. As for the third research question, the study attempts to find an answer to what extent functional types of metadiscourse are found in student essays. Table 3 has summarized, categorized, and ranked related results. It is clearly noticeable from the data that all ten head types of metadiscourse features have been utilized in the essays, but of course, with varying degrees of frequency. One can certainly consider this result as positive and indicative to the students' broad metadiscourse knowledge. The count and percentage of all features are calculated

and listed from the most to the least frequent type. In general, there are remarkable differences between the used features' frequency. Logical connectives (more commonly known as 'Transitions' by EFL students and teachers) have topped the list. This is seemingly because 'transitions' are the most common and useful type of metadiscourse in writing coursebooks. Meanwhile substantial importance is attached to addressing this feature by writing teachers in the EFL context. As far as the difference between major categories of metadiscourse is concerned, it is understood that 'interpersonal markers' (the italicized ones) have occupied the top half of the list and have usually preceded 'textual markers' (the bold-faced ones). Yet, since the subordinate types of textual category is more in number and logical connective type has the greatest rate of frequency, the difference might minimize. This issue is addressed in more detail afterwards.

Table 3: Statistics of Metadiscourse Types Found in Overall Essays

Metadiscourse Type	Frequency Rank	Count	Percentage
Logical connectives	1st	205	30.87
Hedge	2nd	90	13.55
Emphatic	3rd	86	12.95
Person marker	4th	58	8.73
Sequencing	5th	45	6.78
Attitude marker	5th	45	6.78
Relational marker	6th	33	4.97
Code gloss	7th	30	4.52
Evidential	8th	29	4.37
Label stage	9th	22	3.31
Endophoric marker	10th	13	1.96
Topic shift	11th	8	1.20
Announce Goals	12th	0	0.00
Total		**664**	**100%**

The fourth research question of the study was about whether there is any difference between the use of textual and interpersonal metadiscourse types. The reason behind such a question was to discover which metadiscourse markers category is employed by the sample students in their discourse more than the other. In response to this question, all metadiscourse markers found in the argumentative essays were classified and listed according to the two major roles they play in a text - the textual role to hold the text together and the interpersonal role to interact with readers. The two tables that follow illustrate the exact markers' example used by the students. The examples have been grouped within their corresponding types and placed under their own superordinate category. The example markers are listed only once and their identical repetitions

are overlooked.

Table 4: List of Metadiscourse Markers Found in Overall Essays – Textual Types

Textual Metadiscourse	Examples (Markers)			
Logical Connectives	accordingly also although and as a result because but	furthermore hence however in addition in contrast moreover nonetheless	on the contrary on the other hand or since so therefore	though thus whereas while yet
Frame Markers *(Sequencing, Topic Shift, Label stage)*	***Sequencing*** first firstly four last second secondly	thirdly three to start with two ***Topic Shift*** well	***Label Stage*** all in all in conclusion to repeat overall to conclude to sum up	
Endophoric Markers *(Endophoric, Announce goals)*	chapter example see			
Evidentials	according to argue say / said	believe claim shows		
Code Glosses	called for example in other words that is	for instance in fact specifically such as		

Table 5: List of Metadiscourse Markers Found in Overall Essays – Interpersonal Types

Interpersonal Metadiscourse	Examples (Markers)			
Hedges	almost	in general	mostly	suspect
	apparently	likely	often	usually
	believed	little	possible	would
	could	may	probably	
	doubt	maybe	relatively	
	generally	might	sometimes	
Emphatics	actually	True	it is clear	show
	always	certainly	know	sure
	definitely	clearly	no doubt	the fact that
	even if	demonstrate	obvious	well known
	never	essential	of course	won't
	obviously	I believe	should	
Attitude Markers	admittedly	unfortunately	important	
	disagree	even	must	
	hopefully	have to	prefer	
	interest	I agree	surprisingly	
Relational Markers	by the way	think about		
	consider	us		
	let	you		
	note	your		
Person Markers	I	my		
	our	we		

Teachers and syllabus makers can make use of the above data to understand what metadiscourse features the students are good at, how many off-style or conversional markers are found, what needs to be done to address students' knowledge gap in metadiscourse.

In response to which metadiscourse category is more widespread in the students' essays, the following statistical operations were fulfilled:

Using 'Two-sample t-test' formula, the correlation outcomes between the two metadiscourse categories were found as shown in Table 6. On the face of it, the 'use count' stands for mere frequency of markers within each category. The 'percentage' makes it easier than numbers for readers to understand the gap between both categories. 'Mean', which accounts for the average of total markers within each category, is crucial for each of 'standard deviation' and 'p. value' calculations. Standard deviation explains how dispersed numbers

are from the 'mean': The closer standard deviation is to 1, the better indication it has. A low standard deviation implies that the data set is close to the 'mean'; whereas a high standard deviation means the values are spread out over a broad range. According to the statistical results of the present study, the two metadiscourse categories have a high standard deviation which accounts for the fact that the students' use of metadiscourse markers are different from one another in terms of frequency and types. The last determining operation is 'p. value'. This statistical value correlates two sets of data under the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the two compared variables or data sets. This hypothesis is accepted only when the probability value is equal or greater than (0.05). Since the p. value of the textual and interpersonal metadiscourse markers are way greater than this number, it is statistically confirmed that the difference between them is not significant. So, it is deduced from these results that the sample students in this study have shown a relatively equal performance in the use of both metadiscourse categories.

Table 6: Correlation between Textual and Interpersonal Metadiscourse

Operation	Textual Markers	Interpersonal Markers
Use count	352	312
Use Percentage	53.01%	46.98%
Mean	11.3	10.4
Standard Deviation	3.76	3.80
P. Value (statistical Difference)	*0.178*	

The following figure illustrates the percentage of metadiscourse types' use found in argumentative essays written by Kurdish students of English as a foreign language at University of Basic Education.
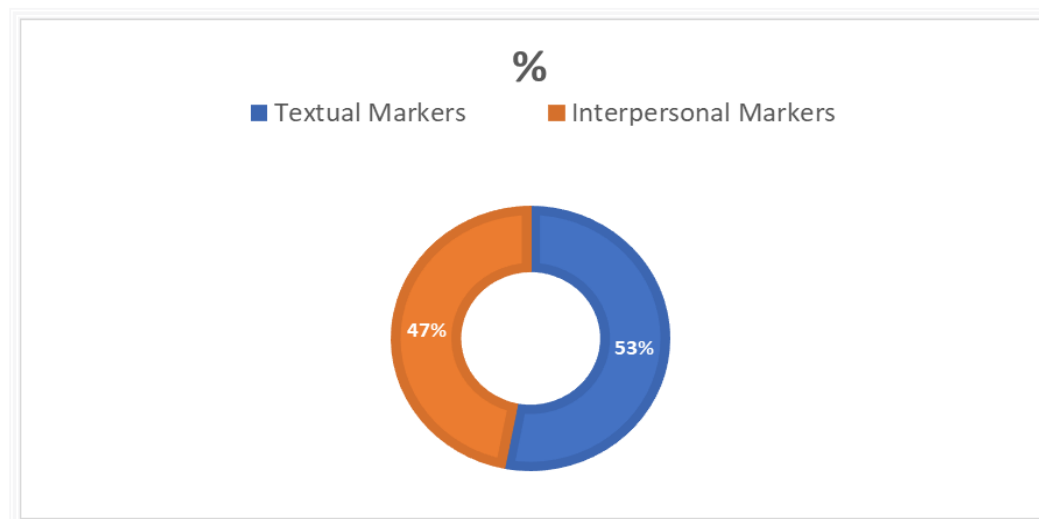

Figure 1: Textual vs Interpersonal Use of Metadiscourse

Last but not least, the fifth research question about the relationship between sample students' English level and their use of metadiscourse in writing, can be answered depending on the results and discussions presented above. The researchers deliberately selected advanced senior students of English department for

the study. The selection was carried out through running a placement test for the research population. Based on the findings of the study, it can be confidently stated that there is a direct relationship between students' English proficiency in general and writing metadiscourse use in particular. This can be confirmed by the evidence that the students have been able to utilize all types of metadiscourse in a limited number of essays.

6. Conclusions and Implications

In academic writing, especially argumentative genre, metadiscourse features are regarded as useful devices for establishing effective communication, demonstrating writers' stance, and interactions with readers. These communicative goals are achieved via the employment of certain metadiscourse types in writing. The types are grouped under two superordinate classes, 'textual' and 'interpersonal'. They are both operated by writers to perform distinct functions, then accomplish various discoursal purposes. Each metadiscourse type is represented by some markers that are used to, for example, link ideas together, signal text's direction, show writers' opinion and attitude, and connect with the reader. So, based on the outstanding value of the topic under discussion, this study was carried out to find, analyze, categorize and correlate the metadiscourse markers used in argumentative essays written by Kurdish university EFL students. The study analysis resulted in drawing the following conclusions. In general, the senior students of English department have a good command of using metadiscourse in their writings. All the participants have performed well in terms of quantity and quality of metadiscourse features. Nonetheless, some students need remedial teaching regarding the overuse of metadiscourse markers as they have given priority to quantity over proper usage of metadiscourse. The students have proven their comprehensive knowledge of metadiscourse by using all its types to a relatively similar extent. Moreover, the level of metadiscourse features of almost all sample students are advanced according to the CEFR benchmark which is in line with their advanced level of the English proficiency achieved via using a placement test. More importantly, the students are very successful not only in connecting ideas but also in building interpersonal relationships with their audience. This last statement is supported by the fact that both interpersonal and textual metadiscourse types are found in their essays equally. Considering all that has been stated, a few implications are to be formulated. Substantial importance seems to have been attached to metadiscourse types in teaching writing based on the positive findings of the present study. This might be attributed to the nature and content of writing coursebooks followed by writing teachers at university. Nonetheless, teachers need to reform two aspects. Firstly, they have to raise students' awareness that correct and proper usage of metadiscourse is far way important than overusing it. Secondly, students need to be exposed to metadiscourse teaching in a balanced way according to the text genre they compose.

References

Baker, P. (2010). Corpus Methods in Linguistics. In L. Litosseliti (ed.), Research Methods in Linguistics (pp. 93–113). London: Continuum.

Beauvais, P. (1989). A Speech-act Theory of Metadiscourse. Written Communication, 6(1), 11–30.

Breyer, Y. A. (2011). Corpora in Language Teaching and Learning. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Bunton, D. (1998). The Use of Higher Level Metatext in PhD Theses. English for Specific Purposes, 18, S41–S56.

Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA), Activity 4: Complexity in oral vs. written language

https://carla.umn.edu/learnerlanguage/spn/comp/activity4.html#:~:text=A%20type%2Dtoken%20ratio%20(TTR,a%20 given%20segment%20of%20language

Crismore, A. (1989). Talking with Readers: Metadiscourse as Rhetorical Act. New York: Peter Lang.

Crowhurst, M. (1990). Teaching and Learning the Writing of Persuasive/Argumentative Discourse. Canadian Journal of Education, 15(4), 348-359.

Gholami, J., Nejad, S. R., & Pour, J. L. (2014). Metadiscourse Markers Misuses; a Study of EFL Learners' Argumentative Essays. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 98, 580 – 589. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.454

Hyland, K. (1998). Persuasion and Context: The Pragmatics of Academic Metadiscourse. Journal of Pragmatics, 30, 437–455.

Hyland, K. (1999). Talking to Students: Metadiscourse in Introductory Coursebooks. English for Specific Purposes, 18(1), 3-26.

Hyland, K. (2000) Disciplinary Discourses: Social Interactions in Academic Writing. London: Longman.

Hyland, K. (2004) Disciplinary Interactions: Metadiscourse in L2 Postgraduate Writing. Journal of Second Language Writing, 13(2), 133–151.

Hyland, K., & Tse, P. (2004). Metadiscourse in Academic Writing: A Reappraisal. Applied Linguistics, 25(2), 156–177.

Intaraprawat, P., & Steffensen, M. S. (1995). The Use of Metadiscourse in Good and Poor ESL Essays. Journal of Second Language Writing, 4,253-272.

Mauranen, A. (1993). Contrastive ESP Rhetoric: Metatext in Finnish-English Economics Texts. English for Specific Purposes, 12, 3–22.

Schiffrin, D. (1980). Metatalk: Organisational and Evaluative Brackets in Discourse. Sociological Inquiry: Language and Social Interaction, 50, 199–236.

Simin, S., & Tavangar, M. (2009). Metadiscourse Knowledge and Use in Iranian EFL Writing. Asian EFL Journal, 11(1), 230-255.

Valero-Garces, C. (1996). Contrastive ESP Rhetoric: Metatext in Spanish-English Economics Texts. English for Specific Purposes, 5(4), 279–294.